

Influenza

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infects the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to avoid the flu is to get an annual vaccination and it is recommended for all individuals older than six months of age. The most common misconception is the idea that you can catch the flu from the vaccination, but this is NOT true.



Flu symptoms include:

- Fever and chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Some people may have vomiting and/or diarrhea

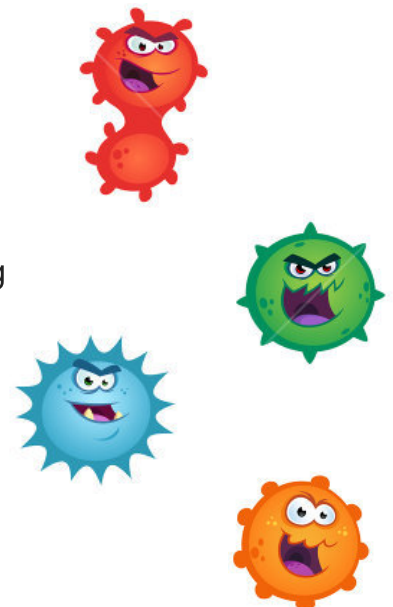
The flu virus spreads mainly by tiny droplets made when infected persons cough, sneeze, or even talk. A person may get the flu by touching an infected surface, then touching their mouth or nose. People are most contagious 3-4 days after their illness begins, but in some cases people may be able to infect others one day before they are sick and even 5-7 days after becoming sick.

Anyone can get the flu, but those with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, children, and those over the age of 65 are at higher risk.

There are antiviral medications that may help to treat the influenza virus

Preventing the spread of the Flu:

- Wash your hands often throughout the day with soap and water
- Clean surfaces with disinfectant to kill the flu virus
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Staying away from people who are sick
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick
- It is suggested that you be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to work or school



Information provided by